

Maine, as our cold winters are long and many of our citizens use petroleum products to heat their homes; and

Whereas, diesel fuel prices for Maine truckers are causing severe economic hardship for this hardworking industry and gasoline fuel prices continue to rise, causing financial hardship to all Maine citizens; and

Whereas, it is apparent to the United States Congress and the citizens of Maine that some of the serious factors causing the high prices are excessive trading, speculation and, allegedly, manipulation of the commodities market; and

Whereas, the United States Congress passed, in December 2000, at the behest of the American energy company Enron, what is known as "the Enron Loophole" as part of the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000, Appendix E of P.L. 106-554, 114 Stat. 2763, and this loophole allows electronic exchanges set up for large traders to operate without any federal oversight; and

Whereas, one of the fundamental purposes of futures contracts is to provide price discovery, and those selling or buying commodities in the spot market rely on futures prices to judge amounts to charge or pay for a commodity; and

Whereas, since the creation of the futures markets in the agricultural context decades ago, it has been widely understood that, unless properly regulated, the markets may distort the economic fundamental of price discovery through excessive speculation, fraud or manipulation, and the federal Commodity Exchange Act has long been praised as preventing those economic abuses; and

Whereas, a recent bipartisan United States Senate report, "The Role of Market Speculation in Rising Oil and Gas Prices: The Need to Put the Cop Back on the Beat," stated that as much as 25% of the cost of a barrel of crude oil may be due to the cost of speculation and profiteering taking place in these unregulated commodities markets; and

Whereas, this speculation and profiteering unfairly causes many Maine citizens to pay excessive fuel and gas prices: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That We, your Memorialists, on behalf of the people we represent, respectfully and strongly urge and request that the United States Congress rein in this excessive energy commodities speculation and enact meaningful reforms of the Commodities Futures Trading Commission, including closing "the Enron Loophole"; and be it further

Resolved, That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to President of the United States Senate and to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and to each Member of the Maine Congressional Delegation.

POM-352. A resolution adopted by the State Board of Education of the State of Mississippi urging Congress to support the passage of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, in December 2000, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, a Federal act, was signed into law; and

Whereas, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act provides federal funds to school districts with national forest lands located within the school districts boundaries; and

Whereas, 36 school districts have substantial tracts of land in public ownership which can neither be developed nor taxed to generate revenue from economic activity or taxation; and

Whereas, these school districts have United States National Forests within its boundaries and have received critical funds for schools based on revenues generated from these forests; and

Whereas, the payments provided to these school districts have been a consistent and necessary source of funding for the schools, teachers and students; and

Whereas, in December 2007, the United States Congress removed the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act from the Energy Legislation to which it was attached. This legislation was subsequently passed and signed into law without reauthorization for the Secure Rural and Community Self-Determination Act; and

Whereas, the funding provided through the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act will significantly contribute to the local economy of these school districts by providing the necessary funds for schools and roads, which is vital for sustained economic development; and Schools and Community Self-Determination Act; and

Whereas, these school districts depend on the funding from the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act and unless the funding is secured through legislation as deemed appropriate by the Mississippi congressional delegation, these school districts will lose critical funding that it has received for decades: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the state board of education of the state of Mississippi, That we, the members of the State Board of Education of the State of Mississippi, respectfully request that the United States Congress pass the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act so that these Mississippi school districts may continue to adequately maintain schools and sustain economic development in the state. Be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the State Board of Education is directed to transmit copies of this resolution to President George W. Bush, the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the Governor of the State of Mississippi, each member of the, Mississippi congressional delegation, the Executive Director of the National Association of State Boards of Education, and that copies be made available to members of the Capitol Press Corps.

POM-353. A resolution adopted by the Georgia State Senate urging Congress to withdraw the U.S. from the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America and any other agreement that seeks the economic merger of the U.S. with any other country; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 827

Whereas, President George W. Bush announced the formation of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America with the nations of Mexico and Canada on March 23, 2005; and

Whereas, at a news conference on the same day, President Bush said: "So that the vision that you asked about in your question as to what kind of union might there be, I see one based upon free trade, that would then entail commitment to markets and democracy, transparency, rule of law"; and

Whereas, the gradual evolution of a North American partnership into some "kind of union" or economic merger; of the United States, Mexico, and Canada would be a direct threat to the Constitution and national independence of the United States and would imply an eventual end to national borders within North America; and

Whereas, on March 31, 2006, President Bush at Cancun, Mexico, celebrated the first anniversary of the Security and Prosperity Partnership, confirmed by a White House news release on that same date; and

Whereas, this trilateral partnership to develop any kind of North American merger has never been presented to Congress as an agreement or treaty and has had virtually no congressional oversight; and

Whereas, state and local governments throughout the United States would be negatively impacted by the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America process, such as the "open borders" vision of the Security and Prosperity Partnership, eminent domain takings of private property along planned superhighways, and increased law enforcement problems along those superhighways: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate that the members of this body urge the United States Congress, especially the congressional delegation from Georgia, to use all its efforts, energies, and diligence to withdraw the United States from any further participation in the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America and any similar bilateral or multilateral activity, however named, that seeks to advance, authorize, or fund or in any way promote the creation of any structure or relationship to accomplish any form of North American integration or merger. Be it further

Resolved that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to Vice President Dick Cheney, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, and each member of the Georgia congressional delegation.

POM-354. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Massachusetts urging Congress to encourage Turkey to respect the religious rights of all people; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, the Theological School of Halki, located on the Island of Heybeliada in the Republic of Turkey, was preceded by the Monastery of the Trinity and was characterized as a stadium of wisdom because of its library and those drawn to study on its premises; and

Whereas, the Monastery was rebuilt and rededicated on September 23, 1844, as an Orthodox School of theology, which nurtured educators and scholars from around the world for 127 years and served the needs of the international academic community; and

Whereas, the Theological School of Halki, labeled as a seminary, was closed in 1971 by Turkish authorities pursuant to a law requiring higher education and military training to be controlled by the Turkish State; and

Whereas, Turkish law further requires that the ecumenical patriarch of the Orthodox Church and all clergy, faculty and students of the Theological School of Halki be citizens of Turkey, a requirement that greatly obstructs the prosperity of religious institutions; and

Whereas, before its closure, the Theological School of Halki was the only educational institution for Orthodox Christian leadership in Turkey; and

Whereas, strict limitations have been imposed by the Turkish government that restrict access to the school's library, a collection of some of the rarest and most precious works in the world; and

Whereas, because of these limitations, people are prevented from conducting meaningful scholarly research; and

Whereas, the ecumenical patriarchate in Turkey, where the canonical structure of the